

**Understanding the Crusades:  
Personal Motives of the Crusaders and the Changing Perceptions of the  
War's Consequences**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the Christian attitude toward war and the violence as a result of the Crusades over 1000years. Each crusader had different and personal motives, but the ones that this paper examine are the most common ones. The conclusion reached from the examination was that the motives for the majority of the Crusaders involved in the war were that they participated in the expedition for religious beliefs, not for personal gain and colonization of Islamic states. However, institutionally, the gains made through the Crusades solidified the importance of Christianity in Western society and greatly changed the church's attitude toward violence.

**Keywords:** The Crusades, Christian, Religious belief. Religious Warfare, Holy War

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# 십자군 전쟁: 전쟁 참전의 개인적 동기와 전쟁 결과로 인한 인식의 변화

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## 국문요약

본 논문은 1000 년에 걸친 십자군 전쟁의 결과로 나타난 전쟁과 폭력에 대한 기독교인의 태도에 대해 고찰하려 한다. 십자군 원정에는 각기 다른 개인적인 동기가 있었으나 본 논문이 다루고자 한 것은 그 들 사이의 가장 일반적인 동기였다. 결론적으로 십자군 대다수의 가장 주된 참전 동기는 개인의 이익이나 이슬람 국가의 식민지화를 위한 것이 아닌, 종교적 신념에 따라 원정에 참여하게 되었다는 것이다. 나아가 십자군 전쟁을 통해 서구 사회는 제도적으로 기독교의 중요성을 더욱 공고히 할 수 있었고, 폭력에 대한 교회의 태도를 크게 변화시켰다는 점에서 십자군 원정의 의의를 찾아볼 수 있을 것이다.

**주제어:** 십자군전쟁, 기독교, 종교적 신념, 종교 전쟁, 신성전쟁

## **I. Introduction**

There were a number of events during the Crusades, such as the massacres inflicted by the Turks on the Christian inhabitants of Edessa in 1145, and by Richard I on the Saracen defenders of Acre in 1191 (Bohadin c.1191, 129) were indeed abhorrent by today's judgement. But it is arguable that attempts to apply modern moral views without apparent consideration for the depth and nature of the religious beliefs, the endemic state of violence and the warring construct of society that existed at the time, is wholly unrealistic.

The focus of this paper is to seek a contextualized understanding of the crusades by attempting to identify the most significant factors that shaped Western and Eastern Christian attitudes to violence and warfare over a period of approximately 1000 years. In attempting such an exercise, readers of this paper who wish to learn about the armies, battles, personalities and campaigns of the Crusades will be disappointed, for that is not its purpose, and neither does it seek to focus on the Holy Land or any other particular crusading theatre. Nonetheless, this paper does conclude that religion, and not colonization, was the primary motivating factor for the vast majority of crusaders, albeit the secular concerns of power, influence and politics became progressively more significant at the higher levels of society. The contending view is that the crusades were not primarily about religion at all, but were instead about land, conquest, and colonization is dismissed with the support of contemporary accounting for the costs of crusading.

In seeking to understand the phenomenon of crusading it is important to state that it was not a development that occurred spontaneously in the latter stages of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. People from all levels of society felt and believed what they did as a result of a centuries-long evolution of Church attitudes to violence, the nature of sin, and the societal context in which these attitudes prevailed. A significant proportion of this paper is therefore devoted to the examination of Christian thought on the use of violence and the development of the concept of "holy war". In order to fully understand the significance of what occurred, it is necessary to examine the ideological struggle that the Church had faced in evolving from a pacifist group in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, to an institution urging war in God's name some 700 years later.

The paper will examine the role and motivations of the papacy in calling for crusades against what were alleged to be the enemies of Christendom, be they Muslims, schismatics, heretics or pagans, and will contest that the Church considered these individual crusades against disparate enemies in parts of the continent as diverse as Egypt and Finland to be individual battles in the same overarching campaign rather than as conflicts in isolation.

## **II. The Holy War Pre-1095**

The evolution of Christianity from its roots as a minor sect of Judaism came to a point of clear delineation by about 50 A.D at which point a distinctive group opposed, and was opposed by, the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem (Solomon 2016, 24). During this formative period, early Christians were fundamentally pacifist and based their beliefs on the teachings of Christ and his disciples. However, the religion faced a major difficulty when it

was adopted by the Emperor Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century given that the Roman Empire had until that point been largely founded and maintained by war; how then were Christians to reconcile their pacifist beliefs with their responsibilities as secular rulers and citizens who had a duty to fight for, and defend, the *res publica*? (Runciman 1951, 83)

The adoption of Christianity in 4<sup>th</sup> century Rome undoubtedly required that functional accommodation be reached between the new 'official', but still minority, religion and the politics of empire. In mechanical military terms, this was initially achieved for the new Christians in the army through the adaptation of existing pagan Roman ceremonies e.g. the refashioning of imperial standards and pre-battle prayers to Mars to suit the new faith (Bachrach 2015, 3). But, whilst these moves were important in accounting for the emerging religious attitudes of the time and for maintaining the historic continuity of religion in the Roman military, they did not of themselves serve to illustrate the critical importance attached by the Romans to the centrality of religion in warfare. It is therefore arguable that Christian beliefs, from the outset, had to be subverted to fit this construct. However, the use of religion for military purposes went much wider than this, being instrumental in inextricably binding together the fortunes of civil society and the armed forces that represented it. Indeed, the maintenance of public support was deemed politically crucial, given that civilian mass public prayer was considered essential to ensuring a divine guarantee of victory. In this way religion had historically come to occupy a two-fold position and it is arguable even at this early stage that literal interpretations of the bible and the centrality of pacifism were untenable in contemporary Roman society; instead, Christianity needed to evolve as a scriptural faith that required churchmen to find ways of reconciling biblical teachings with real life (Tyerman 2004, 66).

However, it was not theology alone that influenced the church and secular thinking on the relationship of Christianity to war, but also that of the Romano-Greco legal tradition that set out the concepts of just war (*jus bellum*) and just cause (*casus belli*) as the Empire was undergoing its large-scale conversion to Christianity. Early Christian writers such as Ambrose of Milan (d.397) and Augustine of Hippo (d.430) were instrumental in integrating Christian acceptance of war with the responsibilities and ideology of the Roman Empire.(Tyerman 2004, 69), with Ambrose drawing his thoughts from the ideas of earlier Christian or pagan writers, which he adapted to the public and people of his time. (New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia 2006) Of particular note however are the writings of Augustine that helped formulate the theory of the *just war* and his advocacy for the use of force against the Donatists (a schismatic group), in which he asked '*Why...should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return, if the lost sons compelled others to their destruction?*' (Augustine of Hippo c.422, 22-24) Thus, whilst the essential elements of the relationship between God and war were undoubtedly derived from the Bible along with subsequent canon law, it was the development of written secular law that allowed the application of violence to evolve within wider society and, consequently, early wars sanctioned by the state against external enemies could *ipso facto* be deemed just in secular terms. However, it is critical to the examination of the genesis of the crusades that secular 'just' wars were not considered at the time to be just in the eyes of God, and this fundamentally divisive moral conflict is likely to have weighed heavily on the minds of Christian soldiers up to and beyond the calling of the First Crusade.

The practicing of 'military religion' was therefore a fundamental aspect of Roman campaigning both prior to and after the Empire converted to Christianity, and this arguably continued to be the case after its disintegration and replacement in Western Europe by the Carolingian Imperium. Indeed, evidence suggests that political rulers continued to develop and sustain religious rites in order to obtain divine support in battle, particularly during the reign of Charlemagne, and that where such conflicts were accompanied by the conversion of the conquered to Christianity they were considered to be wars of faith (Tyerman 2004, 72); it was also during this period that the first canon on the non-participation of priests in combat was issued (Bachrach 2013, 34). If anything, the role of religion in the military grew in importance as divine support became more necessary than ever when fighting against fellow Christians, with a particular emphasis on the need to establish a *casus belli* that demonstrated the justness of one's own cause whilst proving in public that the enemy had forfeited his right to heavenly succour a purpose for which excommunication was sometimes used (Bachrach 2013, 70).

These developments however do not address the overriding conflict between the Church and the practice of war, namely the act of taking human life, and it remained one of the central tenets of early Christian doctrine that killing, even in self-defence, was a sin that separated a perpetrator from the community. Indeed, the strong antipathy of the Christian leadership in this regard even after Constantine's conversion is evidenced in the decisions of Episcopal councils from the 5th to the 7th centuries in which bishops refused to distinguish between types of killing, grouping all such acts (including killing in the course of war) under the definition *homicidio*, which was formalised under the first canon of Pope Hilary IV in 465 (Bachrach 2013, 24). The effect of this canon is likely to have caused particular difficulty for soldiers in that their profession was therefore by definition inherently sinful. This situation was further complicated by additional canons that excluded soldiers from the communion of the Church until such time that they had served penance, which at that time could only be undertaken through a once-only baptism or sacramental penitential act that precluded their return to military life on pain of excommunication (Bachrach 2013, 25).

This was also likely to have been made especially confusing for soldiers by apparent contradictions in biblical teachings and their subsequent interpretation, and in particular the New Testament charity texts that were held to dictate that forgiveness applied only to individuals and not to the behaviour of public authorities, to which Gospel and Pauline texts could be interpreted to show that obedience was due (Tyerman 2004, 69). Indeed, Paul arguably sanctioned public violence when he stated that *'Everyone must obey the state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God.'* (Tyerman 2004, 69) Moreover, the Old Testament, the use and study of which was far more prevalent in medieval times, provided many examples to support the use of violence with God Himself portrayed as *'a warrior [who] is awesome in power [and] breaks the enemy in pieces, [and whose] anger blazes out and burns them up like straw.'* (Exodus 15:3-7) It is therefore unsurprising that during this period an increasing number of bishops sought papal guidance on the nature of sin committed in pursuance of what the secular law, and perhaps the Old Testament, defined as a just act, and in particular the subsequent penitential consequences for soldiers.

In response the Church found it increasingly necessary to take a nuanced view on the nature of *homicidio* i.e. that there were differing degrees of homicide, although it continued to remain innately sinful. Priests began to develop strategies to deal with people ‘stained with sin’ as a result of their professions, which initially focussed on the availability of acts of mercy for lay people unable to undergo sacramental penitence, and which offered a limited form of spiritual salvation. Whilst no specific canon was ever issued to this effect, it can be ascertained through the surviving texts of sermons and from comments made by Pope Gregory I (590-604) that the repeatable penitential acts of almsgiving, fasting and prayer could replace sacramental penance and thus provide an opportunity to obtain eternal life. This process arguably culminated in the 7<sup>th</sup> century development of penitential manuals, also known as ‘tariff books’, in which tables of sins were set out against the appropriate penance to be undertaken (Arrunada 2019, 14). These documents allowed for the first time the imposition of a relatively uniform standard of church response to sin; and secondly, specific chapters of manuals were compiled for use by clerics when dealing with soldiers and the types of activities they would undertake within their profession when engaged in publicly sanctioned warfare (*bellum publicum*). The two major effects of this were that soldiers now had the opportunity to undertake repeatable confession, which meant that they might henceforth die in a state of relative grace, and also that the single definition of *homicidio* was no longer appropriate (Bachrach 2013, 27-29).

The official recognition, within the tariff books, that the circumstances in which homicide was committed were relevant when considering the seriousness of the act is a significant milestone in the development of medieval Christian warfare; indeed, once this line had been crossed it became progressively easier for the Church to move the goalposts as to what construed ‘acceptable’ homicide in *bellum publicum*. The second major development around this time was the introduction of penitential indulgences (also known as privileges or remissions), first recorded as being offered by Pope John VIII (872-82) when Rome was confronted by marauding Muslims. In effect, these indulgences remitted the penalties of sin for those who fought or were killed in battle against the infidel, and thus for the first time within some ecclesiastical circles the taking of life whilst engaged in a specific church sanctioned campaign was not considered to attract the stain of sin (Tyerman 2004, 73), although it appears likely that a great deal of disagreement continued to exist within the wider church as to the acceptability of such rulings.

In considering the developments in Christian thinking on holy war, the radical reforms of Pope Alexander II (1061-1073) and his successor Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) were arguably the most significant, albeit they built on the historic changes of the view on homicide as described above. In the first instance, Alexander claimed that he possessed the authority, bequeathed to him by the apostles, to lift the obligation of penance from those campaigning for the good of God and the Church against the Saracens in Spain. In effect this meant that serving in war, including the killing of the enemy, now became a means of expiating sins rather than incurring them and then having to later expiate them through penance. Furthermore, Alexander went on to praise the shedding of Saracen blood as praiseworthy, albeit shedding that of Christians remained sinful (Bachrach 2013, 92). With this ideological hurdle overcome, it is unsurprising that those in a position of influence were soon able to harness this new form of warfare for use against other ‘threats’, and the first indulgence for troops fighting other Christians was granted shortly after by the Bishop of

Lucca in 1084, and followed rapidly by church texts arguing that war against schismatics and heretics was virtuous. These practices were further consolidated and developed by the dual Gregorian reforms that simplified the structure of the clergy and its practices and, most significantly, imposed greater consistency and discipline on church organization including the greater use of canons (Bull 2015, 24), to the extent that by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century the new interpretation of homicide had achieved a prominent place in canonical law. The unequivocal argument that Christianity was rendered impure by its host societies is perhaps too simplistic as choice always existed e.g. as evidenced by the strong and continuing tradition of non-violent monasticism (Bull 2015, 15-16). Nevertheless, during the conversion of the (primarily Germanic) Carolingian successor states from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there was no escaping the fact that war occupied a central part in culture and politics, and that whilst converting the warring lords it became necessary for the Church to recognise these attributes – if only because its own survival depended on them. The effect over time was therefore that in many instance warriors were Christianised whilst at the same time the Church became militarized, presiding over a culture where warriors received religious as well as social approval (Tyerman 2004, 70-72). This relationship was subsequently further cemented by the emerging external and internal threats to Christendom.

### III. The Calling of the Crusades

By 1095, Western Europe was a patchwork of frequently warring entities that were held together by a military aristocracy whose power base relied on controlling resources through the use of force as much as through civil law. The position of the Church had evolved significantly to the point where it was willing to condone certain types of violence, albeit there was rarely agreement on this point, and there existed throughout Europe a large number of nobles and men-at-arms who were engaged in the violent pursuit of their interests but who at the same time were painfully aware of the sinfulness of their customary activities and genuine in their desire for penance. In the context of the times, holy violence was routine and familiar. So, when the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus, for personal and political ambitions - analysis of which is outside of the scope of this paper, sought the assistance of Western Christendom in regaining the Holy Land from Muslim occupation, Pope Urban II was presented with an opportunity to advance papal and church interests in a number of areas. In the first instance, a Western expedition would channel endemic violence away from Europe and employ it for the good of the Church, rather than to its detriment; secondly, it suited the papal policy of asserting supremacy over both church and state that had been developing over the previous half century (Tyerman 2004, 20-21), and especially in terms of boosting the power and authority of the Curia in relation to the secular Holy Roman Emperor; thirdly, it provided the opportunity to carry evolving theories on the remission of sin through to maturity and thus cut the Gordian Knot of how to reconcile violence and Christianity; and finally, it might serve as a vehicle to reconcile, to the benefit of the Latin Church, the Western and Eastern branches of Christianity which had suffered a *de facto* schism in 1054.(Madden 2013, 45) However, none of this was new; indeed, an earlier plan by Pope Gregory VII to lead a Western military expedition to free Jerusalem in 1074, in response to a call from the then-Byzantine Emperor Michael VII, had come to nothing as he had been too preoccupied by controversies elsewhere. So, what made it different this time?

Significantly, Urban II was already sponsoring wars against the Muslims in Spain and it is arguable that he saw the expedition to the Holy Land as opening a new front in the same war, rather than it being an individual conflict in its own right. Perhaps confusingly, the call to the Crusade, sparked by Urban's sermon to the Council of Clermont on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1095, was from the outset simultaneously for both peace and war. It emphasised the need to re-enact the Truce of God at home i.e. to reduce violence, whilst at the same time highlighting the religious rewards available to those who would partake in an expedition overseas, namely the remission of sin through the granting of crusade privileges (also referred to as indulgences); in effect, those who fought for the Church and who put God's infidel enemies to the sword could guarantee their entry to Heaven and ensure their enjoyment of the afterlife (Halsall 2006, 2) – arguably not a huge leap in papal thinking given the preceding development of church attitudes towards homicide and the 'piloting' of remission on a smaller scale elsewhere.

#### **IV. For Conquest Rather Than Christ**

The main argument supporting the counterview that the crusades were principally motivated by personal enrichment is underpinned by the medieval civil legal practices of agnatic (or patrilineal) descent or primogeniture (literally 'first born'). Agnatic descent was established by tracing descent exclusively through male bloodlines. Primogeniture was the common tradition of inheritance by the first-born of the entirety of a parent's wealth, estate or office. Agnatic primogeniture was inheritance by the eldest surviving male child, with females excluded, and male-preference primogeniture was inheritance by the eldest surviving male child, but where females could inherit, provided the subject had no sons; this was the usual 'feudal' primogeniture practiced in Western Europe (Petre 2015). The consequence of such laws, which were mandatory in some states e.g. England until the enactment of the 1540 Statute of Wills (Tiley 2014, 227), was that whilst elder sons 'scooped the pot' the younger brothers were left with little or nothing; indeed, if they wanted land and money of their own (and assuming no 'fateful' events befell an elder brother who had produced no heir), then the only ways they could achieve this would be warfare or marriage.

It is therefore frequently argued that the crusades provided the ideal opportunity for these 'younger brothers' to gain land and wealth of their own, Smail's '*land-hungry Normans*', who were joined on an opportunistic basis by Genoese merchants and traders eager to exploit the economic potential of the expeditions (Smail 1956, 18). But whilst there were inevitably some individuals for whom these factors were a prime motivating factor, most of those who took the cross and set out on the crusades were neither the younger sons of wealthy families nor merchants (Riley-Smith 2005, 66). It is more the case that there was a distinction between the crusaders that fought the early battles and the settlers that followed in their wake to populate the Latin kingdoms of Outremer, with little evidence to show that membership of the two groups overlapped significantly. Indeed, far from being a profitable exercise, crusading was very expensive. For the majority of participants, who were not in receipt of ecclesiastical subsidies or in the paid service of their monarch, the only way to raise the funds was to mortgage their properties at often-crippling rates of interest, condemning their families to the short-term or possibly permanent loss of inheritance.



(Riley-Smith 2008, 113) Furthermore, given that most crusaders desired, if not expected, to return home, they showed little interest in permanent emigration; thus, it becomes difficult to argue in practice how the acquisition of crude material profit featured in their motivation (Tyerman 2004, 96).

Participation in the crusade was not without its other dangers either; the experiences of wives left behind for periods of years to manage estates and raise children, surrounded by aggressive neighbours and litigious relatives, could be extremely hazardous, and judicial records reveal that many were murdered in the absence of their husbands, church or state protection notwithstanding (Riley-Smith 2005, 72). And, the consequences of failure for the crusader himself were equally dire, with no group in the central middle ages bringing so much invective and criticism down on their own heads as they did after the disasters of the Eastern military expeditions from 1101 onwards. It was ideologically necessary for the Church to blame the crusaders rather than the holy campaign for every failure, crusaders that failed to achieve their objectives were subjected to torrents of abuse from those at home as a result (Riley-Smith 2005, 71). In fact, crusaders risked death, injury, their reputations and financial ruin, and even those that were successful and returned home more often than not were rewarded only with the social standing that came from participating in so prestigious an activity and the knowledge that they had served their God.

## **V. The Secular Motivations for Crusading**

The concept of crusading matured so the reasons for its employment changed amongst the power elites of the day, and especially for a papacy that was involved in an ongoing political confrontation with many of Europe's secular rulers; consequently, it is argued that, whilst the motivation of most individual participants in the crusades continued to be primarily religious, the reasons for which many expeditions came to be called were increasingly secular and political.

The evolution of crusader privileges between 1095 and 1270 provides a useful vehicle from which to examine this proposition; in particular, they show a remarkable degree of continuity and highlight both the continuing and predominant influence of religion and the concurrent increase in the centralization of papal authority throughout this period, either directly or through the medium of church councils and vassal kings, albeit the differing social and political situations that existed on the occasions of the proclamation of each privilege means that they should also be considered in the context of their own times. (Constable 2016) Nonetheless, some common and accumulating themes can be observed running through the 7 privileges granted between these dates for crusades not only against the Muslims, but also against Christian heretics and excommunicates. In particular, the original remission of sin granted by Urban II was repeated in all the privileges granted in turn by Pope Eugenius III (1146); King Philip Augustus of France (1188); the Fourth Lateran Council (1215); Pope Innocent III (1207-8); Pope Innocent IV (1248); and King Louis IX of France (1270). However, it was additionally joined by the placing of the goods and families of crusaders on campaign under the protection of the Church in their absence and the banning of lawsuits against active crusaders (Eugenius III, 1146); the release of crusaders from the

payment of interest on debts whilst they were in church service; the release of crusaders from a number of financial obligations to their lords; and a ruling that lords ignoring these decrees be excommunicated (Philip Augustus, 1188) (Munro 1895, 15); directives compelling the secular powers to restrict Jewish debt collection from crusaders and, significantly, the granting of full remission of sins for those who did not go on campaign but supported it materially or financially (Fourth Lateran Council, 1215) (Munro 1895, 16-18); and the assumption from the secular power by the Church of jurisdiction to try crimes alleged to have been committed by crusaders and men of religion (Louis IX, 1270) (Munro 1895, 20).

So, what can be made of these? Aside from the enduring nature of the remission of sin, the privileges appear to be designed to both break down the obstacles that may have prevented the faithful from taking the cross, i.e. 'signing-up' for a crusade, and to extend the reach of the Church. In particular, and given the violent nature of the times, the offer of protection by the Church for a crusader's family and possessions in his absence should not be underestimated. Notwithstanding, the major theme that stands out, namely the extension of church powers into the secular realm, underlines the degree to which the crusading ideal was beginning to colour the everyday nature of contemporary society. Moreover, the manner in which crusading now had a direct bearing across national boundaries on the protection of estates, the payment of interest, debt relief, the ability of landlords to exercise rights over their own properties and the trial and judgement of criminals meant that many individuals in the lands supplying warriors to the crusades were now touched by the vast scope of the project, whether they were personally involved or not. Furthermore, the significance of the extension of indulgences to those who contributed financially or materially to expeditions *but who did not actually take part* should not be underestimated, as the number of individuals to whom the above listed exemptions applied therefore increased considerably and thus extended the population under the direct legal authority of the Curia to the detriment arguably of the secular authorities.(이정민 2014, 293-294) This in turn served to extend the crusading ideal, its religious symbolism and the associated church authority even further into the collective civil consciousness and experience of the times.

The major facets of crusading history are the processes that together became known as '*the business of the cross.*' (Llyod 1995, 42) For despite the religious fervour that contributed to motivation and morale, mounting such expeditions was not a spontaneous matter; indeed, no amount of passion was going to create war, crusading or otherwise, without the organization of recruitment, finances, logistics, military structures and ideas (Tyerman 2004, 86). This is important because the business of the cross and crusading arguably provided the means by which the papacy was able to generate increased control over the Church as a whole, to extend its influence over the secular realm to an extent previously unheard of and, ultimately, to use this power to control the future direction of crusading and the nature of its targets.

Essential for maintaining momentum, raising funds and facilitating recruiting was the publication and subsequent preaching of the papal bulls that set out the religious justification for the crusades. Indeed, preaching crusade sermons became a highly organized and idealized evangelical affair by the time of the Third Crusade and through this process the papacy was able to spread an increasingly coordinated message, making particular use of artificial and ritualized staging as a systematic means of sending an unambiguous message

(Maier 2016, 67). A further consequence of this centralizing effect was that the sermons themselves began to reflect the agendas of the popes, and this was particularly prevalent during the reign of Innocent III whose key elements of reform were reflected in the sermon's mixture of a direct appeal to the laity, penance, confession and duty to Christ. Consequently, the sermons came to be used to coordinate a mixture of disciplines, people and ideas that were attractive to a Church increasingly intent on the convergence of belief and devotional practice (Tyerman 2004, 92-93).

Above all else, however, was the criticality of finance which was the key to both secular power and the success of crusading. It is therefore unsurprising that rules for borrowing money featured in the earliest crusade bull, *Quantum praedecessores* (1145/6) and its most important successors, *Audita Tremendi* (1187) and *Quia Maior* (1213) (Tyerman 2004, 94). Few records of the exact costs of crusades survive, but the best documented is Louis IX's first crusade, estimated by the French government in the 14<sup>th</sup> century to have cost 1,537,570 *livres tournois* between his departure in 1248 and return to France in 1254, a sum equivalent to more than 6 times his annual income. However, when 'hidden costs' such as for the measures he was required to take to pacify his kingdom before departure are included, a figure nearer to 3,000,000 *livres*, or 12 times his annual income is probably more accurate (Llyod 1995, 54). Furthermore, whilst the earlier crusades relied primarily on individual participants funding their own passage to the Holy Land, as time progressed and the nature of crusading and its purposes changed the Christian armies had to pay not only for their own expenses, but also for the services of the mercenaries upon whom they had become increasingly reliant. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that the biggest change in crusade financing during these centuries was the emergence of secular and ecclesiastical taxation specifically for this purpose and significantly, in terms of 'power projection', the structures necessary for their collection. This was partly a function of the realization of the expense involved with the earliest crusades, but also a development that resulted from the considerable growth in the political consciousness and apparatus of the secular states and the papacy, and the centralization and sophistication of fiscal exploitation and administration (Llyod 1995, 56).

Secular taxation preceded papal measures in this regard, the former being codified into more structured and graduated national taxes in England and France in 1185, with the first compulsory tax raised specifically to fund a crusading expedition (the 'Saladin Tithe') being raised in 1188. But with the exception of this tax, most secular taxes were generally voluntary and not compulsory, typically being seen more in the tradition of almsgiving. However, this was not the case for papal taxation of the church where from the outset both institutions and individual churchmen were expected to provide funds for crusade purposes. These taxes in turn required a massive and elaborate system of collection, administration and transmission, which also took in church donations, legacies and private gifts (Tyerman 2004, 88-89). The system of administration and collection arguably had a longer lasting effect on church organization than it did on church finances, namely that the presence of such a massive and complex undertaking caused the level of representation of the Curia at both local and national levels across Western Europe to both proliferate and accelerate, at which point it was well positioned to oversee the practical enforcement of the new central doctrine of universal Christian involvement in God's war, i.e. that all should contribute (Llyod 1995, 58). Indeed, the establishment in 1198, for the Fourth Crusade, of a new general

executive office for the business of the cross, specifically saw the appointment of one or more papal executors to church provinces for this very purpose (Llyod 1995, 46).

With capability established, it was up to the church to determine how best to utilize its weapon. It can be contended that even some of the earliest crusade architects' motivations were politics dressed as religion. A case in point are the Northern Crusades of the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, which were essentially fought as wars of conversion to regain 'Christian territory' that had previously formed part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century Ottonian empire, and which was therefore deemed to be a reconquest in the mould of the Iberian *reconquista* (Christiansen 2007, 58). However, the continued expansion of Christendom beyond the Ottonian borders can be seen as little more than blatant expansionism and territorial conquest by the monarchs concerned. Rivalries for territory existed between crusaders such as the Danish kings and those from the Germanic states, and neither was beyond massacring fellow Christians and converts when it suited their purposes; indeed, it is arguable that the most significant value of the Baltic wars of conversion was not primarily religious, but was instead their role as the key to political aggrandizement, expansion and wealth, with rulers rewarded by the popes for their 'crusades' and struggles against their common political enemies (Christiansen 2007, 70).

It is also the case that the trend to secular motivation under the guise of religious war was increasingly not the sole preserve of the Northern campaigns. Indeed, such motivations arguably became progressively dominant in both Europe and the Levant, initially with the Fourth Crusade's attack on the Eastern Christian city of Constantinople that was entirely a result of the prospects of territorial and financial gain rather than religion (MacCulloch 2014, 14). Indeed, with the trend to secular exploitation of crusading by now firmly established, the institution arguably reached its nadir in the declaration of crusades by rival popes against one another after the Great Schism of 1378, in which Christendom divided initially into 2, and later 3, obediences. Thus, for all the firmly-held religious beliefs that underpinned it, the secular exploitation of the crusading ideal by power elites ultimately caused the institution to turn in on itself in a remarkably unhealthy way (Housley 2005, 270).

## VI. Conclusions

It is the contention of this paper that, whilst crusading was primarily a product of a combination of religious, social and political circumstances that came together in such spectacular fashion in 1095, it was also an artificial and multi-role construct that was more latterly employed by the popes in a wide range of theatres as part of a single overarching campaign. Indeed, it is the enduring theme of the battle against the enemies of Christendom, or in some cases more specifically the pope, rather than particularly against Muslims in the Holy Land, that binds this period of history so closely together and unites seemingly unconnected conflicts from as far apart as Finland and Syria. It is also contended that the popes who held office throughout this period were consecutively involved in extending and buttressing the political power of both themselves and their office not only with regard to the secular authorities of the time, but also within the Roman Church itself as they sought to establish a temporal state in Italy. The Latin kingdoms of Outremer were short-lived, but the

Christian conquests in Iberia and North-East Europe contributed to the emergence of new Christian states, the borders of which even today are used.

From this perspective it is unsurprising that crusading came to be seen by the popes as a malleable instrument to be employed against a wide range of opponents. The initial deployments against the infidel in the Holy Land and Iberia accorded with a certain logic, given the times and the mainly religious nature of the goals. But taken together they were both arguably part of the same big picture, namely 'protecting' the frontiers of Christendom, in that they occurred simultaneously and were given crusade status and support by the same popes for largely the same reasons. Later expeditions in the North and against internal enemies of the Curia were arguably motivated more by secular concerns than by religion, but the employment of the same justificatory framework to allow the award of crusade status, particularly through the use of indulgences, meant that for many of the participants the expeditions continued to be, first and foremost, a devotional exercise. Indeed, such was the magnitude and strength of righteous feeling behind the enterprise that the long-term religious impact of the crusades continues to be felt today, both within the divided Christian churches themselves and amongst the Muslims, Jews and others against whom the warriors of Christ fought.

Consequently, it is assessed that such secular motivations that the leadership may have had did not serve to undermine the primarily religious underpinnings of the first campaigns in particular, nor the extent of the personal sacrifice exhibited by the vast majority of those who took part in the early enterprises. Indeed, for all the power and political ambitions that arguably played an increasing part in the control of crusading, it remained for its participants a fundamentally intense devotional exercise that cost many their wealth, reputation or lives for little or no material gain. Certainly, some specific events such as massacres are and were indefensible to most, even too many contemporaries, but it is only by viewing the totality of events through the lens of their era that an informed and appropriate appreciation of their 'rightness' or otherwise can be ascertained. To do otherwise is to fail to grasp the centrality of the concerns of religious belief and identity that can only be understood in the context of their time, and not ours (Tyerman 2004, 144).

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